

Measure Up

Winter 2007-08

Assessment news for middle school teachers



Facts About NAEP 2008

- From October 8 to December 14, 2007, over 13,000 thirteen-year-olds took the NAEP long-term trend assessment in reading or mathematics.
- From January 28 to March 7, 2008, over 39,000 eighth-graders will take the NAEP field tests in reading, mathematics or science, to help prepare for the 2009 assessments. Additionally, some eighth-graders will take the main NAEP assessment in the arts.
- Over 800 middle schools have been selected to participate in NAEP 2008.
- Over 600 NAEP staff will administer NAEP 2008 to students.

2007 Reading and Mathematics Results Released

On September 25, the results of the NAEP 2007 Reading and Mathematics assessments were released.

In reading, eighth-graders nationwide:

- ★ Scored 1 point higher in 2007 than in 2005 and 3 points higher since 1992.
- ★ Had higher percentages of students performing at or above the *Basic* achievement level in comparison to both 1992 and 2005.
- ★ Had no significant change in the percentage of students performing at or above the *Proficient* achievement level than in previous years.
- ★ Had higher scores for White and Black students compared to 2005, but no significant difference in scores for Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander or American Indian/Alaska Native students than in previous years.
- ★ Had no change in the White-Black, White-Hispanic or Male-Female score gaps in comparison to either 1992 or 2005.

Source: Lee, J., Grigg, W., and Donahue, P. (2007). *The Nation's Report Card: Reading 2007* (NCES 2007-496). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C.

In mathematics, eighth-graders nationwide:

- ★ Scored higher in 2007 compared to earlier assessment years.
- ★ Had an average mathematics score that was up 2 points since 2005 and 19 points compared to the first assessment in 1990.
- ★ Had higher percentages of students performing at or above *Basic* and *Proficient* achievement levels than in previous years.
- ★ Had higher scores for most racial/ethnic groups than in previous years.
- ★ Had a decrease in the score gap between White and Black students since 2005, but no change in the White-Hispanic gap.

Source: Lee, J., Grigg, W., and Dion, G. (2007). *The Nation's Report Card: Mathematics 2007* (NCES 2007-494). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C.

Released NAEP Items and Scoring Guides: Valuable Classroom Resources for Instruction

Released NAEP items can be a valuable instructional tool for teachers. After each assessment, NAEP makes public some of the questions; more than 2,000 questions are available at the NAEP Questions Center (<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/itmrls>).

For instance, NAEP writing questions can help students learn to evaluate their own writing. In order to self-assess effectively, students need to recognize the qualities of good writing. Students need specific instruction on evaluating writing using a rubric and they need exemplars of good written work. Once students become adept at evaluating writing according to a

rubric, they can learn to evaluate and improve their own writing.

Each NAEP writing question comes with a scoring guide, samples of student writing for each score, and scorer's commentary to explain why each sample of student writing was scored as it was.

There are a variety of ways in which teachers can use the materials. Teachers can:

- Use the scoring guide and samples of student writing to have students evaluate the samples using the rubric.
- Ask students to respond to the writing prompt and, after instruction in evaluating

the NAEP student writing samples, ask students to evaluate their own writing.

- Examine the national and state student performance data for individual writing questions.

A sample grade 8 writing question, sample student responses, scoring guide and scorer's commentary are provided below.

Source: Foy, J. (2007). *NAEP Assessment Toolbox for Teachers: Easy-to-Use Classroom Activities Using Questions and Data from the National Assessment for Educational Progress*. Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, Anchorage, Alaska.

Sample grade 8 writing question

Imagine that you wake up one morning to discover that you have become the President of the United States. Write a story about your first day as President.

Sample student responses

Excellent:

Today was my first day in office as president of the United States. Wow! What a huge job! Today was a very confusing day for me. This is how it started.

I woke up early and got ready for the day. I took a shower, ate breakfast, and got dressed in my very best outfit. Then I went to the office.

The office was huge! It had big clean windows, with bright, warming rays of sunshine streaming through the spotless glass. Out the window, I saw a huge lawn of freshly cut grass, that was as green as I had ever seen. I could see the lawnmower as it cut in neat little rows and columns, and, I opened a window to smell the wonderful aroma of that fresh cut grass.

All of the sudden, I heard the ear-piercing shriek of a fire alarm. I saw red flashing lights all around me, and I could hear the words, "Security Breach" being shouted in the hallway. Then the SWAT Team burst into the room and shouted, "Don't move! Put your hands on your head! Turn around facing me, and spread your legs!"

As soon as I turned around, they all started apologizing. I told them not to worry about it, and they went on their way.

After that, the day went on without another incident. I could hear the phones at my secretary's desk ringing off the hook. Many important looking people came in to ask my advice on some of the nation's issues, and I answered all their questions to the best of my ability.

At lunchtime, I took an extra long lunch break to tour the White House. I never realized how big it was! I got lost three times, and I had to use my cell phone to call my secretary. She had to come find me and bring me back to the office.

The actual food at lunch was weird. I got all these different gourmet foods, half of which, I didn't even eat. Tomorrow I'll have to ask for McDonald's.

When I got back to the office, my personal phone was ringing. It was one of my friends from back home, wondering how I was doing. I was in tears by the time I hung up, because I realized just how much I missed by friends.

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Scoring Guide Excerpts

Excellent

- Tells a clear story that is well-developed and shaped with well-chosen details across the response.
- Sustains variety in sentence structure and exhibits good word choice.

Skillful

- Tells a clear story that is developed and shaped with details in parts of the response.
- Exhibits some variety in sentence structure and some good word choices.

Sufficient

- Tells a clear story that is developed with some details.
- Exhibits control over sentence boundaries and sentence structure, but sentences and word choice may be simple and unvaried.

Uneven

May be characterized by one or more of the following:

- Attempts to tell a story, but parts of the story are unclear, undeveloped, list-like, or repetitive OR offers no more than a well-written beginning.
- Exhibits uneven control over sentence boundaries and sentence structure; may have some inaccurate word choices.

Insufficient

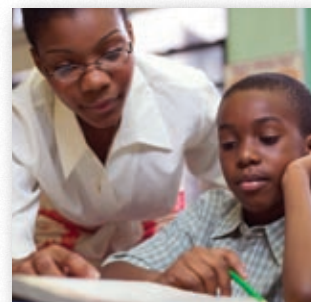
May be characterized by one or more of the following:

- Attempts to tell a story, but the attempt may be a fragment and/or very undeveloped.
- Minimal control over sentence boundaries and sentence structure; word choice may often be inaccurate.

Unsatisfactory

May be characterized by one or more of the following:

- Responds to prompt, but provides little or no coherent content OR merely paraphrases the prompt.



- To use released items in the classroom, teachers should visit <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard> and select "Sample Questions."
- From there, teachers can select Questions Tools followed by the subject. A series of questions will appear and teachers can review the questions, sample student responses, and performance data for students nationwide.

Sample student responses - Continued from previous page

The day started off good, and I felt like I had tons of luxurious space around me, but after the phone call I felt like I was trapped in a small cage.

I decided to go for a walk outside with my dog Suzie. The fresh air made me feel much better.

I don't know if I can do this job, but I'll try my best!

Scorer's commentary

"Excellent" responses provided detail and development across the response and exhibited sentence variety and good word choices. The sample response shown above uses good descriptive detail to develop events that occur over the day, doing so with sentence variety and even some suspense, as when the security SWAT team bursts into the office.

Insufficient:

One day I went to bed not knowing that I was going to wake up the president of the United States of America.

I woke up and everyone knew me because I was the president and everyone was asking me what I was going to do about certain issues, I did not know what to tell them. I had lots of responsibilities as president.

Scorer's commentary

"Insufficient" responses attempted to tell stories but were extremely brief, disorganized, or marked by severe errors in sentence control and/or grammar. The response above is very brief and what is there exhibits a lack of sentence control.

What is the Nation's Report Card?

The Nation's Report Card informs the public about the academic achievement of elementary and secondary students in the United States. Report cards communicate the findings of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a continuing and nationally representative measure of achievement in various subjects over time.

For over three decades, NAEP assessments have been conducted periodically in reading, mathematics, science, writing, U.S. history, civics, geography, and other subjects. By collecting and reporting information on student performance at the national, state and local levels, NAEP is an integral part of our nation's evaluation of the condition and progress of education. Only information related to academic achievement and relevant variables is collected. The privacy of individual students and their families is protected, and the identities of participating schools are not released.

If you want to...

Visit...

Learn more about NAEP results

The Nation's Report Card at
<http://nationsreportcard.gov>

View NAEP data for a particular state or contact your NAEP State Coordinator

The National Center for Education Statistics at
<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/states>

Access specific results for a grade level, subject, jurisdiction, and/or student groups

The NAEP Data Explorer at
<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nde>

Find information regarding the types of questions used on NAEP assessments or to view subject-specific questions

The NAEP Questions Tool at
<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/itmrls>

Download a Sample Questions Booklet that contains sample test questions for the upcoming and previous assessments

The National Center for Education Statistics at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/booklets.asp>

Learn more about how policy is drafted for each NAEP assessment

The National Assessment Governing Board at
<http://www.nagb.org>

Offer a comment or suggestion on NAEP

The National Center for Education Statistics mailbox at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/contactus.asp>

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